

Mr. Speaker, the next time you or any of my other colleagues find yourself in western South Dakota, on your way to visit Mount Rushmore or the Black Hills, I encourage you to stop by Wall Drug to enjoy a refreshing cup of ice water and take in a little bit of western culture. I assure you it won't be hard to find; just follow the signs.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE COMBAT ZONE TAX PARITY ACT

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Federal Employee Combat Zone Tax Parity Act, which would provide parity by extending the tax credit currently received by military personnel to the civilian Federal employees working along side them.

Just the other day I received an e-mail from a constituent who is currently stationed in Afghanistan. She said: "I am completing a one year tour with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Kabul, Afghanistan. I work with the U.S. military and I live in the same residences with the U.S. military. During the riots on Memorial Day, I listened to the same gunfire as the U.S. military and I wore the same 30 pounds of Individual Body Armor and the Kevlar Helmet as the U.S. military."

It is only equitable that both military and civilian employees who are serving side by side receive the same tax treatment. In fact, even contract employees can get a tax break through the foreign earned investment tax credit, but Federal employees are specifically exempted from that tax credit.

As a former Federal employee, I am keenly aware of the invaluable contributions Federal employees make to our country. I believe we must ensure that our Federal workforce is treated with fairness and respect.

The Pentagon stated in the proposed regulations for the new National Security Personnel System that "NSPS is essential to the department's efforts to create an environment in which the total force, uniformed personnel and civilians, think and operates as one cohesive unit." What kind of message does it send to civilian employees if they receive disparate tax status from their military colleagues?

Just as military personnel, Federal employees serving in combat zones must leave their families behind and this can increase the financial burdens on families. Families with two working parents suddenly have only one parent able to care for the needs of the family. Military personnel in combat zones were given a tax credit back in 1913 to help alleviate their tax burden, but Federal employees were left out.

Since 9/11 it has become ever more vital to have a thriving civil service participating in our efforts to fight the war on terrorism. Now more than ever in our nation's history we must take action that reflects the contributions both our civilian and military employees are making—in the war on terrorism and as well as the daily operations of the Federal Government in providing the services upon which every American relies.

Federal employees are on the front lines of the war against terror.

The first American to die in Afghanistan was a CIA agent from my district.

Federal employees are in Iraq helping the Iraqi people to build a free nation.

Throughout the world, America's civil servants are serving our government and our people, often in dangerous locations.

How can we tell them we will not give them a fair and equitable tax credit that recognizes their hard work, dedication, and sacrifice?

We are asking Federal employees to take on more and more responsibility every day. They are on the ground in the war on terrorism taking over new roles to relieve military personnel of tasks civilian employees can perform. They are all playing a vital role in keeping us safe and deserve to be treated with respect and fairness.

We have a long tradition in the Congress of recognizing the valuable contributions of our federal employees in both the military service and in the civil service by providing fair and equitable treatment. This is not the time to shirk our duty to the civil service.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the Federal Employee Combat Zone Tax Parity Act.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK ROMERO

HON. JOHN T. SALAZAR

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an upstanding member of my community. Frank Romero passed away on Monday, July 24, 2006. He was 77.

Frank was a good man whom I knew well. He was a man committed to his family, his community and the Lord.

Frank spent 20 years as the treasurer for Conejos County. In that time, he produced some of the best audit reports the county had ever seen.

Frank was a tireless advocate for agriculture in the San Luis Valley. A farmer and rancher himself, Frank was connected to the land and knew the value of a hard day's work.

In our community, Frank was a servant in the true sense of the word through his work in the Knights of Columbus and other organizations.

Frank will be remembered as a loving family man, a devoted public servant and a genuinely good man. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, dancing, welding, traveling, reading, working on his ranch, snowmobiling and all outdoor activities with his family.

My heart goes out to Frank's family including his wife Philomena and his many children and grandchildren. I would like to express my personal gratitude for Frank's friendship.

TRIBUTE TO GREATER PHILADELPHIA HEALTH ACTION, INC.

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Greater Philadelphia Health Action, Inc. (GPHA) as it joins commu-

nity health centers nationwide in celebrating "National Health Center Week," August 6–12.

National Health Center Week highlights the importance of community health centers as a vital part of health care systems in medically underserved areas. "Celebrating Patient Voice and Community Choice," is the theme of this year's campaign. The theme emphasizes the vital role that community boards of directors provide related to the delivery of health care to the community and determining the range of affordable services provided by the centers.

GPHA was founded in 1970 by the late Carl Moore, a long-time community activist who came together with other community leaders to form GPHA, one of the first medical managed care programs in Philadelphia. It is a community-based, grass roots effort whose mission is to provide quality comprehensive primary health care, health education, human services and child development services to families and individuals throughout the Delaware Valley, regardless of a patient's ability to pay.

The celebration of National Health Care Week also affords the opportunity to highlight the contributions of Mr. Moore and GPHA CEO Ron Heigler, recently elected chair of the Pennsylvania Primary Health Care Forum and his committed staff. All are to be congratulated for continuing to carry on Mr. Moore's vision of providing quality health care to the underserved.

Today GPHA operates six full-service health centers and a behavioral health program, as well as the Woodland Academy Child Development Center in Southwest Philadelphia. The centers also offer specialized treatment and patient education related to asthma, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes and HIV/AIDS.

There is no doubt that GPHA and the nation's community health centers fill a major void in our Nation's health care safety net.

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF PATROL AGENT SIMON GARZA, JR.

HON. HENRY BONILLA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American soon scheduled to end his lifelong career of service to our Nation—U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol Marfa Sector Chief Patrol Agent Simon Garza, Jr.

Born in Laredo, Texas, Chief Garza has spent his entire career fighting to secure our borders and ensure our freedoms. Chief Garza began his career, after studying engineering at the University of Houston, by serving in the United States Army, including service in the Republic of Vietnam in 1969 and 1970. In 1975 he joined the United States Border Patrol as a member of the 10th Session at Port Isabel, Texas. After graduation from the Border Patrol Academy, he received his first assignment in his home State in the Del Rio Sector. After much hard work and determination, Chief Garza was promoted in 1985 to Supervisory Border Patrol Agent. By 1990 he was again promoted to Patrol Agent in Charge, and by 1994 he was part of the senior staff at the Del Rio Sector Headquarters, serving as Assistant Chief Patrol Agent.